CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method operative to automatically exclude a blank page in an input stream of a printing system job from an output stream of the printing system job, the method comprising the steps of:

5   detecting data representative of a blank page in the input stream; and

          deleting the data representative of the blank page from the input stream, thereby excluding the blank page from the output stream.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

          notifying an operator of detected data representative of a blank page.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

          requesting permission to delete data representative of a detected blank page.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of detecting comprises:

          statistically sampling marking information across data representative of a page; and

5   detecting data representative of a blank page based on comparison of results of the statistical sampling to a threshold value.

5. A method operative to automatically exclude unwanted portions of a job from an output stream of a printing system, the method comprising the steps of:

describing characteristics of the unwanted
5 portions of the job; and

searching within input image data for portions of the job that have the described characteristics.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of describing characteristics comprises describing characteristics of a blank sheet.

7. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of describing characteristics comprises describing characteristics of a separator sheet.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of searching within input image data comprises measuring a percentage of marking of a sheet.

9. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of searching within input image data comprises using pattern recognition techniques to search for matching characteristics.

10. The method of claim 5 further comprising locating a portion of the input image data that has the described characteristics.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
notifying an operator that a unwanted portion has been located; and

accepting one of an authorization and a
5 prohibition from the operator to remove the unwanted portion.

12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

deleting the located portion from the input data to generate output data; and

delivering the output data to the output stream.

13. A printing system operative to automatically remove unwanted portions of input image data, the printing system comprising:

a pattern detector operative to receive a description of an unwanted portion of the input image data, search for a portion of the input image data that corresponds to the unwanted portion description, and relate information about a found portion that corresponds to the description; and

a portion deleter operative to receive information from the pattern detector regarding a location of the at least one unwanted portion of the input image data and to remove the at least one unwanted portion of the input image data to generate output image data.

14. The printing system of claim 13 further comprising an image destination operative to receive the output image data and at least one of, transmit the output image data to another device and generate hard copy corresponding to the output image data.

15. The printing system of claim 13 further comprising a default settings repository operative to store and make available to the pattern detector at least one of, a default unwanted portion description and processing procedure information.

16. The printing system of claim 13 further comprising an electronic pre-collation memory operative to store image data and provide a working area wherein the portion deleter modifies the image data to generate output image data.

17. The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a print engine.

18. The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a xerographic printer.

19. The printing system of claim 14 wherein the image destination comprises a facsimile modem.